

it could be said, moral considerations outweighed political power.

True, this war is vastly more complex, harder to stop and more atrocious than France's Algerian effort. But it is also true that the peace movement has faced it with proportionately less intelligence, less outrage at injustice, less taste for risk than the French revolutionaries. We whose society springs from profound revolutionary roots, whose country was torn from 1877 to 1914 by a series of labor explosions more ferocious than any counterpart in the world, become frightened at the word revolution, no less so than by the civil disobedience needed for a controlled revolution.

Yet America is a radically sick society, and any talk of reforming it without revolution is nonsense—revolution of consciousness and conscience, revolution

of economic and institutional life. Jefferson, at the very time the Constitution was being framed, spoke of the need of revolution every twenty years in a society like ours. And sociologists have long referred to "an iron law of oligarchy" which seizes representative government, making holders of power insensitive to the needs of the masses.

Of one thing we can be sure, revolution will come: a welfare-warfare state like ours cannot for long contain it. It might be delayed, it cannot be forestalled. And it will come violently, through a combination of escalating urban terror and Southeast Asian war, both of which could coalesce in World War III. Or it will come nonviolently because we have the humaneness to do what is right whatever the consequences; because, in fact, we have insisted that our country be given back to us.

The Press and Foreign Policy: A New Dimension

The Artillery of the Press, by James Reston. Harper & Row. 112 pp. \$3.95

by John M. Lavine

James "Scotty" Reston's *The Artillery of the Press* succinctly presents some of the most pressing questions about our country's foreign policy, and the part the President, the Congress, the press, and the public play in forming and affecting that policy. Unfortunately, the book falls far short of what the reader might have expected from one of America's most distinguished journalists in terms

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of explaining the long-range effects that the press might have in reporting foreign policy and its influence on it.

In his introduction Reston says, "My theme is that the rising power of the United States in world affairs, and particularly of the American President, requires, not a more compliant press, but a relentless barrage of facts and criticism, as noisy but also as accurate as artillery fire. . . ."

This introductory challenge sounds like Reston. It sets a goal which one assumes his book will try to explain. Yet much of the book—which is an expansion of the author's Elihu Root Lectures before the Council on Foreign Relations in 1966—seems to turn Reston's optimistic challenge into an unclear, Lippmann-type pessimism.

Reston, like Lippmann, wonders if the press can have any but an indirect effect in educating the public about the major issues of foreign policy or in affecting the government as it formulates our foreign policy.

One side of the paradox of Reston's presentation is exemplified by what Reston says of the role of the press:

"We are no longer merely in the transmitting business, but also in the education business. Actually, the mass communications of the country probably have more effect on the American mind than all the schools and universities combined, and the problem is that neither the officials who run the government nor the officials who run the newspapers, nor the radio and television programs, have adjusted to that

fact." In short, Reston is saying that the press can have an impact on the American public and policy makers.

Then, having made this statement, he turns around and elaborately denies that the press can have any real impact at all. He also denies that, even if it were possible, there would be any merit in affecting the public en masse.

To defend his case that the press has no impact, Reston makes a number of points. First, he says that foreign policy really is in the hands of the President and that not even the Congress can materially affect it.

"I believe that the power of the Presidency has been increasing steadily since World War II, particularly since the introduction of nuclear weapons, and that the power of the press and even of the Congress to restrain the Chief Executive has declined proportionately during the same period. Presidential power in the foreign field is in direct proportion to the size of the issue. The press can irritate and humiliate him personally. . . . [But] as the leader of a worldwide coalition of nations, engaged in constant contention with hostile forces in scores of different theaters of action or maneuver, he is virtually assured of support once he proclaims his intentions. The Congress, of course, retains its power to deny funds to carry out his plans, but it cannot do so without repudiating him in the face of the enemy and assuming responsibility for the crisis that would surely follow."

Reston also says that a variety of technical and historical traditions limit the press from having any impact. He notes that these traditions may seem like nitpicking, but that they are actually most serious. Among those which he cites are: the size of government and the complexities involved in learning "where to get information"; the tradition of the "cult of objectivity" which requires that the press, for example, report "the charges of the late Senator Joseph

McCarthy about the State Department, when the reporter knows that these charges are untrue." Then Reston points to the fact that reporters like to have the prestige of swinging with the V.I.P.s of government and being "insidesters"—even if this means that they will expose only the peripheral mistakes of government officials, but will not question these officials' major, basic policies and blunders, since such reporting would close the reporters' "open door." Reston also contends that the reporter has an interest in his news sources and so will do nothing which will destroy those sources. In fact, he says, many reporters become spokesmen for their sources in their zeal to keep the source alive. (A similar comment was made by Walter Lippmann as he left Washington. Lippmann noted that "cronyism," especially in the nation's capitol, was a substantive danger to a good journalist.)

• Thus far, anyone who is at all knowledgeable about reporting—its traditions and problems—will find Reston's presentation both interesting and truthful. It is from this point, however, that Reston's *Artillery of the Press* seems to lack the depth that one expects from the dean of American journalists.

Having outlined the traditions and pressures which hamper a good reporter, Reston fails to analyze, except on the surface, the dynamics of the relationships between the reporter and his news sources. More important, he does not present any meaningful answers as to how these negative relationships might be improved or avoided. Furthermore, having set up the proposition that the press cannot directly influence the President, Reston suggests, as another proposition, that all that is left is for the press to occasionally influence Congress and to address itself to what Lord Bryce calls, "the educated remnant."

Having read this proposition, it

is certainly surprising to this reader that James Reston resorts to cutting the press' influence down to "the educated remnant." By so doing, he momentarily seems to fall into *The Public Philosophy* of Walter Lippmann. Lippmann said the press could and should only affect an "elite" who run public affairs, rather than affecting a broader populace with a more democratic base.

What is so striking about these pessimistic and limiting effects of the press is that they are in 100% opposition to what Reston has so long stated, as well as to the theme that he set forth in his introduction, quoted above. In light of that theme and challenge to the press, it would seem that James Reston should have analyzed some of the effect of the press, in the best sense of the term, in America today. He should also have conducted this analysis outside the realm of the *New York Times*—a unique newspaper—and outside of Washington in places where "cronyism" and many other negative pressures do not burden the writer on foreign policy.

There are approximately 1,750 daily newspapers in the United States. The average daily circulation of these newspapers is 10,000. Today an ever increasing number of people are familiar with a number of the country's finer small and medium-sized dailies and the type of new format news product they put out, as well as the type of influence they have.

More and more these examples of good journalism are relegating to inside pages the story about the "fourth battle on the nineteenth hill in the twenty-first sector of Vietnam." In place of these dull, dry stories which merely shower the reader with facts, these newspapers are presenting thoughtful pieces of analysis and objective feature writing, which attempt to explain the news, rather than merely add more facts to those that bombard the reader from T.V., radio, periodicals, etc.

It should be noted that when I

refer to feature and analysis commentary in these newspapers, I am not referring to the paper's own editorial opinion. That opinion is relegated to the editorial page. Rather, I am referring to imaginative news-feature and news-analysis reporting often written by people the paper uses as "specialists." The intent of this writing is to analyze the news, to isolate and crystalize major issues, and to give some insight into what effect these issues and ideologies will have both on the news of the day and the news of tomorrow.

Besides this activity these newspapers have also turned away from the "canned" editorial policy of the small and medium-sized dailies of the past. Their editorial pages now ring not only with the words of columnists like James Reston but also with strongly written, decisive editorials by the newspaper's own staff. Furthermore, these editorials are written away from Washington and, as a result, often gain an objectivity and independence that perhaps is difficult for many Washington reporters to achieve.

What is the effect of this type of newspaper? Does it have any effect on its readership? There is no long list of statistics to answer this question. However, one paper of this type recently ran a random sample, anonymous survey of its readership. The paper found that where, earlier, 13% of its readers had been accustomed to read the editorial page on four of the six days it printed each week and 6% were reading it every day it was printed, its editorial page readership had now jumped to 67% for all six days. And the only change the publication had made to account for this rise was to follow the formula outlined above for news features and analysis and editorial page decisiveness and imaginative-ness.

Moreover, the newspaper's publisher and editor reported that though their area was a typically rural, small town, they found when they attended farm meetings and

service club luncheons that their editorial positions, which often conflicted sharply with those of the President, the Pentagon, or the State Department, were not only read, but also thoroughly studied and discussed by the readers. Those readers not agreeing with the opinions did indicate, at the least, their pleasure that the newspaper was taking a stand.

Even more surprising, an ever increasing number of the newspaper's readers expressed hearty approval of the newspaper's stand, as well as substantial thanks for the non-editorialized, news analysis presentations which the readers said gave background and clarity to pressing national issues.

In another instance, two medium-sized, Midwestern dailies reported a startling example of readers' reaction to foreign policy features, analysis, and editorials.

Recently, the publisher and chief editorial writer of these newspapers attended a service club dinner in a rural town of 2,000 in the newspaper's circulation area. The service club was divided about equally between towns people and farmers from the surrounding district. The average age of the men in the group was between 45-50.

The publisher had been invited to make a few remarks honoring a distinguished local office. He offered these and then, because they were very brief, said, more out of politeness than serious intent, "I want to thank you for inviting me. . . . If there are any questions about our newspaper or any stands we have taken, I certainly would be happy to answer them."

Two and a half hours later the publisher staggered out of the church basement where the meeting had been held. The entire time had been devoted to a spirited discussion of foreign policy. To his amazement, the audience recalled editorial stands taken by his newspaper a year to 18 months before. They grilled him on Vietnam, the Common Market, and NATO.

They agreed and disagreed. They wanted to know why the newspaper took certain stands, and they most ably articulated what the newspaper's editorials had said. Finally, they concluded the meeting by thanking the publisher for the job his newspaper did in pointing out and making clear many facts about foreign policy. They also thanked him for articulating an opinion which many said they had adopted because they felt it was sound — though they hadn't felt that way initially.

In short, it is true that the press does not generally have the ability to immediately influence the President, the Congress, or the public on foreign policy issues. However, if one again returns to the few, but increasing, new breed of lively, small dailies which have an editorial page readership of 60% or 80%, such a newspaper is going well beyond the "elite" in those it is affecting.

It can also surely be assumed that such a newspaper does, over the long run, substantially affect the thinking of its readership. It also affects the legislators who represent the newspaper's area, since they cannot help but notice a newspaper which is lively enough to investigate what they are doing and decisive enough to throw bricks and bouquets the legislator's way, depending upon the circumstances.

Then too, the substantial turn in the national feeling about the war in Vietnam can certainly be attributed, in part at least, to the strong comments of these new, lively newspapers and to the independent metropolitan dailies.

These are the papers that are performing the task Reston outlined when he called for "a less provincial, even a less nationalistic press, because our job in this age . . . is not to serve as cheerleaders for our side in the present world struggle, but to help the largest possible number of people to see the realities of the changing and convulsive world in which American policy must operate."

The Defence of "Obedience to Superior Orders" in International Law

Yoram Dinstein. A. W. Sijthoff (Leyden). 278 pp. \$8.22

The author, who studied international law both in his native Israel and in the U.S., examines closely "whether, and when, the perpetrator of an international offense [not only one categorized as a war crime], acting in obedience to superior orders, is to be relieved of responsibility under international criminal law," attempting to "discover trends and appraise prevailing doctrines in the theory of international law, tracing their rationale and penetrating their verbal disguises. . . ."

Encyclical Letter of His Holiness Pope Paul VI On the Development of Peoples

Paulist Press. 80 pp. 95¢ (paper)

Economist Barbara Ward notes in the commentary she has provided for this latest Papal encyclical that "the chief note of Pope Paul's Encyclical . . . is one of burning urgency. The abstract terms and formal language should not deceive us. The Pope sees the whole of humanity confronted with a vast and crisis-laden reality — the reality of its physical oneness and its moral and social division."

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War, Conscience and Dissent

Gordon C. Zahn. Hawthorn. 317 pp. \$5.95

One of the few American Catholics to serve in a Civilian Public Service unit as a conscientious objector in W.W. II, sociologist Gordon Zahn has, since the '40's, written widely on the subject of modern war, pacifism, and dissent and their relation to Church doctrines and actions. This volume is a collection of his essays which appeared in various journals over the years, and there are a few prepared especially for the book.

Prayer As a Political Problem

Jean Danielou. Sheed & Ward. 123 pp. \$3.50

"There is no true civilization," Father Danielou writes, "which is not religious; nor, on the other hand, can there be a religion of the masses which is not supported by civilization. . . . But how are society and religion to be joined without either making religion a tool of the secular power or the secular power a tool of religion?" That is the problem he addresses here, exploring how prayer ("spiritual existence oriented toward God") and modern civilization may interact to the benefit of each.

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